Dear FCC:

It is this licensee’s belief that the following sections of the Part 97 Rules for Amateur Radio Service should be amended or deleted to provide clarity, remove unenforceable requirements, and to reduce the burden on the Amateur Radio Service.

47 CFR Part 1, Subpart G, § 1.1102 Schedule of charges for applications and other filings in the wireless telecommunications services.

Remove all fees related to the Amateur Radio License under Table 2 to Paragraph C Personal Licenses. The Amateur Radio Service has operated for decades with no fee and this addition has been a detrimental and painful process. Allow the Volunteer Examination Coordinators and Volunteer Examiners maintain and process the applications and renewals utilizing the FCC ULS as the checks and balances. A licensee or applicant to be a licensee is still able to maintain their own data and can be done as has been done in the past without any fees. Especially since the fees collected have done nothing to improve the user’s experience in obtaining or renewing a license only made it more burdensome on the user.

§ 97.113 Prohibited transmissions.

(a)(3)(i) This section needs an amendment to allow incidental use of Amateur Radio spectrum as part of an operation or incident by personnel that are licensed Amateur Radio Operators but may be receiving compensation by an employer or a jurisdiction. An example is that of an Auxiliary Communicator (AUXCOMM) under the Department of Homeland Security’s Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS CISA) Communications Unit. An individual assigned the role of AUXCOMM with a state qualification from the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator or other Authority Having Jurisdiction may be receiving compensation while working on a major incident. Currently as the rules are written, this can only apply to a “test or drill” and not an actual incident. The communications the AUXCOMM is undertaking may not be “Emergent” in nature thus not qualify under other rules.

§ 97.407 Radio amateur civil emergency service.

This entire section should cease to exist in today's Amateur Radio Service. Since the FCC is not managing the Amateur Radio Operators, nor is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), nor the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), it is up to local authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ) to manage the RACES program. Unfortunately, this has caused more issues "primarily due to egos of individual operators" to waste precious time on reports and traffic during a RACES net. As the Civil Defense program has been replaced in all ways but name in a few jurisdictions, Emergency Management programs have little understanding of how this rule is to be interpreted and managed.

As an individual that holds not only a degree in the field of Emergency Management but has held the title of Emergency Management Coordinator for a large county and serves on a Statewide Interoperability Coordination Committee, I have firsthand experience that this antiquated rule causes more harm than good. I have personally witnessed and experienced on more than one occasion that some RACES Net Control Operators believe that only a RACES member of their organization may participate in the net regardless of the traffic emergency traffic being conveyed. I personally, tried to pass along the location of a "Funnel Cloud" which would constitute a Tornado Emergency based on ground truth reports and was refused time on the repeater to relay the report to officials. I have also experienced operators refusing to acknowledge a MAYDAY call as the licensed operator was not affiliated with that RACES organization.

It is my firm belief that the RACES program has outlived its useful life and should be removed from the Amateur Radio rules and regulations, but replaced with language similar to other parts of the Wireless Services for relaying communications traffic of emergent situations (specifically Messages directly concerning the immediate safety of life of individuals, the immediate protection of property, maintenance of law and order, alleviation of human suffering and need, and the combating of armed attack or sabotage).

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